



HORWICH
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health,
For Year ended 31st December, 1918.

J. S. SEWELL, M.D.,

M. O. H.

HORWICH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT

For the Year ending 31st December, 1918.

To the Chairman and Members of the

Horwich Urban District Council.

"GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my 11th Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1918.

The Local Government Board have again requested that Annual Reports shall be curtailed and limited to the most essential details of the year's work.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water supply continues good.

It is hoped to begin the paving of Purl Brook early in 1919.

There are 2563 Fresh Water Closets, 1257 Waste Water Closets, 96 Pail Closets, and 59 Privy Middens now existing in the district.

The following is a classified statement of the number of inspections and re-inspections made :

Houses and premises, 209 ; Slaughter Houses, Butchers' Shops, etc., 545 ; Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops, 135 ; Fried Fish and Chip Shops, 22 ; Ice Cream Shops, 9 ; Lodging Houses, 12 ; Schools, 21 ; Waterworks, 6 ; Sewage Works, 4 ; Hospitals, 8 ; Garages and Stables, 58 ; Water Closets, Privies, Urinals, Ashpits, Pail Closets, Mains, Gullies, etc., 225 ; Yards, Streets, etc., 51 ; Red Moss, 15 ; Factories, 8 ; Workshops, Workplaces, etc., 32 ; Bakehouses, 32 ; Infectious Diseases (including Tuberculosis) 33 ; Market, 51 ; Miscellaneous, 238.

165 nuisances have been abated.

39 Informal and 14 statutory notices have been served and of these 39 have been complied with.

Lodging Houses, Schools, Slaughter Houses, Bakehouses, continue in a sanitary condition.

Smoke.—15 observations have been made. No legal proceedings have been taken. The time limit allowed is five minutes in the half-hour.

FOOD :

(a) *Milk Supply*.—There are 34 cowkeepers and 19 purveyors of milk on the register. During August a conflict arose between the Food Control Committee and the farmers as to the price of milk. Until the dispute was settled the Committee requisitioned the milk supply of the district. Owing to complaints of sour milk and the urgent necessity, particularly at that time of the year, of securing a pure milk supply, I found it necessary to issue two special reports reviewing the situation. Copies of these were forwarded to the Local Government Board and the County Council.

(b) *Other Foods*.—There are 3 Slaughter-houses in the district—1 registered and 2 licensed. 1 carcase and offal and 9 sets of offal have been condemned in consequence of the presence of tuberculosis.

Rationing has continued satisfactorily under the care of the Local Food Committee.

HOUSING :—

Under Article V. of the Housing (Inspection of district) Regulations, of 2nd September, 1910, the following is a tabulated statement of action taken during the year :

Number of dwelling houses specially inspected under Section 17 of the Act of 1909	...	...	...	...	...	9
Number of representations to Authority with a view to making closing orders	...	...	...	...	...	none
Number of dwelling houses considered unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	...	...	none
Number of closing orders made	...	...	...	...	...	none
Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied without making closing orders	...	...	...	...	...	9
Number of dwelling houses put into a fit state of habitation after making closing orders	...	...	...	...	...	none
Number of dwelling houses demolished	...	...	...	...	...	none

The general character of defects found to exist continue to be dampness, defective roofs, defective ventilation, &c.

Owing to the shortage of labour there has been considerable difficulty in getting even the most urgent repairs done.

The deficiency of housing accommodation continues to be acute. The Council have decided to erect 400 houses for persons of the working classes and a site has been purchased (known as the Lower Brazley Site) and the lay-out plan approved. Since the advent of 1919, sewerage and road making operations have commenced, and are progressing favourably, and it is hoped that building operations will be put in hand before the end of the summer. 120 houses are to be erected on this site. A further site (known as the Old Racecourse Site) has been purchased from Lord Leverhulme, comprising 30 acres of land.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The total number of notifications—exclusive of Measles—during the year amounted to 20. The diseases notified were: Diphtheria, 3; Erysipelas, 2; Scarlet Fever, 12; Enteric Fever, 2; Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 1. In addition 340 cases of Measles were notified, 292 by doctors and 48 by other persons.

In 1917 the number of notifications was 44. Measles, 197.

Of this year's cases, 10: comprising Diphtheria, 1; Scarlet Fever, 7; and Enteric Fever, 2; were removed to hospital for treatment and isolation.

A widespread epidemic of Measles occurred during the months of February, March, April, May, and June. 4 deaths were recorded as due to this cause. Considerable difficulty was experienced in securing the services of a trained nurse to visit these cases but eventually Nurse Walker was obtained. She carried out the duties from May 6th to July 12th. After her appointment it was significant that no further deaths occurred. I am of opinion that had we had a permanent nurse on our staff, who could have visited at once, more fatalities might have been prevented. As I shall point out later the same remarks apply to Influenza. 158 first visits and 425 revisits were paid by Nurse Walker to Measles cases. Leaflets were also distributed.

The epidemic necessitated the closing of the following schools: S. Catherine's Infants (March 4th to 9th), National Infants (April 12th to 29th), Chorley New Road Infants (April 26th to May 11th), Holy Family Infants (May 24th to June 10th).

Whooping Cough was also very prevalent during the same period as Measles. 5 deaths occurred. 51 first visits and 125 revisits were paid by Nurse Walker to these cases.

4 swabs was examined, 1 positive and 3 negative. 4 blood examinations were made, 1 positive, 3 negative. In addition, in January, an examination of faeces was made in a suspected case of Dysentery with a negative result. These investigations have been carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, Manchester.

INFLUENZA :

During 1918, the pandemic of Influenza visited Horwich in two waves. The first wave was at its height in July and the second in November.

Deaths from Influenza occurred during the following weeks :

			Number of Deaths.		
Week ending	March 30th	...	...	...	1
"	" May 11th	...	...	...	1
"	" June 15th	...	...	...	1
"	" July 13th	...	...	...	2
"	" July 27th	...	...	...	1
"	" September 21st	...	...	...	1
"	" October 5th	...	...	...	1
"	" October 12th	...	...	...	1
"	" October 19th	...	...	...	4
"	" October 26th	...	...	...	5
"	" November 2nd	...	...	...	8
"	" November 9th	...	...	...	6
"	" November 16th	...	...	...	2
"	" November 23rd	...	...	...	1
"	" November 30th	...	...	...	2
"	" December 7th	...	...	...	1
"	" December 14th	...	...	...	2
"	" December 28th	...	...	...	1
Total...			...	...	<u>41</u>

Of these 20 were males and 21 females. This is equivalent to a death rate of 2·7 per 1,000 of the population.

The age distribution was as follows :

0-1 year	...	3	15-25 years	...	8
1-2 years	...	1	25-45 years	...	14
2-5 years	...	2	45-65 years	..	8
5-15 years	...	4	65 years and over.		1

Sporadic cases of the disease occurred during March, April, and May but no epidemic character was assumed until June and July. The incidence of the disease at this time was chiefly on the children. Very few cases occurred during August and September, but during October, November, and December the scourge was again aflame.

I have had several consultations with the other medical practitioners in the town as to the various local features of the disease. All are of opinion that the cases have been similar to those described as occurring in other parts of the country. The incubation period seems to be short, 3 or 4 days. Infectivity does not last probably longer than a fortnight and is most intense during the first few days. The disease has been chiefly spread by personal contact with another case. Overcrowding in homes, tram cars, places of entertainment, etc., has been a fertile source of infection. Persons who have been exposed to infection for only a short period seem less likely to contract the disease than those who for long periods are in close contact with the sick, possibly in a stuffy bedroom. Our experience has been that one attack confers at any rate a temporary immunity to a second attack. Very few persons who were victims during the first wave succumbed during the second. A few striking examples of this have been met with. In one family during the first wave all but the mother were attacked. In the second wave only the mother was a victim. As a parenthesis it may be here stated that during the third wave of 1919 second attacks have been more frequent.

Affections of the Respiratory Organs have been the chief clinical feature of the outbreak. Most of the deaths were certified as secondarily due to Pneumonia. All parts of the district have participated in the epidemic, but the urban areas were certainly attacked before the rural.

The following were some of the principal measures adopted to prevent the spread of the disease: a leaflet was immediately distributed to every house in the district giving precautionary and other advice to the public. Closure of all the schools was adopted from July 8th to Aug. 12th, including the summer holidays, also from Oct. 14th to Nov. 11th.

I am however not convinced that much benefit accrued from this measure. Interviews were held with proprietors of places of public entertainment and inspections were made of the premises with a view to securing the best ventilation possible.

No hospital treatment was possible. As in the case of Measles the disease was at its height before the services of a trained nurse were obtainable. On Nov. 8th Nurse Alderson was secured. From that date until Dec. 31st, she paid 30 first visits and 172 revisits to adults. The cases comprised 12 Influenzas and 18 Influenzal Pneumonias. In addition, Nurse Alderson paid 15 first visits (Broncho-Pneumonia following Influenza) and 62 revisits to children under 5 years of age. Patients appreciated her services very much, as in many homes very little domestic assistance was obtainable. Owing to the widespread nature of the epidemic the medical men of the town were taxed to the extreme limit of their capacity. No prophylaxis by vaccine was attempted.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER TUBERCULOSIS.

Tuberculosis of the lungs caused 11 deaths, a rate of $\cdot 76$ per 1,000. Last year 10 deaths were registered as due to this cause with a rate of $\cdot 69$ per 1,000.

Non-pulmonary tuberculosis caused 6 deaths, a rate of $\cdot 41$ per 1,000. In 1917 there were 8 deaths with a rate of $\cdot 55$ per 1,000.

18 cases of pulmonary and 17 of other forms of tuberculosis were notified under tuberculosis regulations 1912.

27 examinations of sputa were made at the laboratory, 3 positive, 24 negative.

INVESTIGATION OF OTHER DISEASES.

Zymotic Diseases.—The number of deaths due to the principal zymotic diseases including Small Pox, Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, Diphtheritic Croup, Enteric Fever, Measles, Whooping Cough, Epidemic Diarrhoea, and Enteritis, was 9, equal to a rate of $\cdot 62$ per 1,000. In 1917 the rate was $\cdot 97$ per 1,000.

Diarrhoea and Enteritis caused no deaths, a rate of nil per 1,000. In 1917 4 deaths, a rate of $\cdot 27$ per 1,000.

Diseases of Organs of Respiration.—38 deaths were due to these causes: Pneumonia, 27; Bronchitis, 8; and other diseases, 3. The rate is $2\cdot 6$ per 1,000 as compared with $1\cdot 9$ per 1,000 in 1917.

Malignant Disease caused 13 deaths, a rate of $\cdot 9$ per 1,000, as compared with 15 deaths in 1917, a rate of $1\cdot 04$ per 1,000.

MEANS OF PREVENTING MORTALITY IN CHILD-BIRTH AND IN INFANCY.

For several years this subject has bulked largely in my annual reports. I would refer members to these reports.

During the past year considerable interest has been taken and much useful work accomplished in this direction.

The following is a summary of the Health Visitor's report :

First Visits to Infants notified under the Act	...	...	254
Revisits	„	„	1034
Revisits to Children over 1 year	...	...	824
Visits to Infants not born in Horwich	...	...	39
First Visits to Ante-natal cases	...	...	101
Revisits	„	„	107
Visits to Ophthalmia Neonatorum (1 case)	...	...	6
Visits to Measles cases	...	...	114
Visits in connection with deaths of Infants under 1 year	...	...	28
Other Visits connected with Infant Welfare...	...	...	152
			<hr/> 2659 <hr/>

Work in connection with the Centre has been extended during the year. Mothers and expectant mothers are taking fuller advantage of the privilege of interviewing the Health Visitor between the hours—9 and 10 a.m. and 4 and 5 p.m. daily. The Wednesday's Sewing Class has been a considerable help to the young mothers. Short talks are given on Welfare work. The Centre is open every Thursday afternoon for Infant Consultations and weighings, the Medical Officer being in attendance. The average weekly attendance up to Dec. 31st was 76. There are 387 names on the register. The Annual Baby Week was held Aug. 19-24th. The chief events were meetings at the Wesleyan Schools and at the Public Hall; both meetings were well attended and addresses were given by Mrs. Edwards, of Horwich; Miss Lowe, of Blackburn; and the Medical Officer of Health. Other activities of the Health Visitor include addresses at the various schools and attendance at meetings of the Women's Guild of Help. A number of nuisances have been reported to the Sanitary Inspector.

The success of this work in all directions has been greatly due to the hearty assistance of a large band of voluntary helpers. Much arduous and painstaking work has been accomplished.

Owing to the high average weekly attendance at the Centre the need for more commodious premises has been severely felt. Since the advent of 1919, the use of two adjoining rooms has been obtained when it is hoped that the congestion will be relieved and more satisfactory work accomplished.

Infantile Mortality.—25 deaths have occurred amongst infants under 1 year, 14 males and 11 females. The mortality (measured in the proportion of deaths under 1 year to 1,000 births) was 98. Of the 25 deaths, 12 might be said to be due to ante-natal causes, shewing the importance of further efforts in connection with this side of the work.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE DISTRICT.

The statistics are based on two estimates of population. The death rate population, 14,384, excludes all non-civilian males whether serving at home or abroad. This estimate is based mainly upon the rationing returns kindly placed at the Registrar General's disposal by the Ministry of Food. The birth rate population, 16,117, on the other hand is intended to include all the elements of the population contributing to the birth rate. It consists therefore of the death rate or civilian population *plus* all non-civilians enlisted from this country whether serving at home or abroad. This non-civilian element has been distributed over all the districts in the country in proportion to their estimated civilian population.

Deaths.—The total number of deaths registered, including those of residents dying outside the district in public institutions and from violence, and deducting residents from outside who died in public institutions and from violence, in this district was 218. 114 were males and 104 females; giving a net rate of those belonging to the district of 15·1 per 1,000 of the population.

No deaths belonging to our district took place in Fall Birch Hospital.

Births.—During the year the births of 255 children were registered. 118 were boys and 137 girls equal to a rate of 15·8 per 1,000. 4 male and 3 female illegitimate births were registered giving a percentage of 2·7 of the total births.

The following gives in tabular form the most important rates for 1918 as compared with 1917 and the ten previous years:

	Per 1,000 of Population.				Rate of Deaths under 1 year to 1,000 Births
	Birth Rate	Death Rate	Epidemic Death Rate	Phthisis Death Rate	
1918.....	15·8	15·1	0·62	0·76	98
1917.....	15·5	12·5	0·97	0·69	88
Mean of 10 yrs. 1908-1917 ...	21·0	11·8	1·12	8·82	101
Increase or De- crease in 1918 on Previous year...	+0·3	+2·6	-0·35	+0·07	+10
10 yrs' Average	-5·2	+3·3	-0·50	-0·06	-3

The following tables, compiled by the Registrar General, give the number of deaths from various causes in this district, also birth rate, death rate and analysis of mortality during the year 1918 for England and Wales :

Causes of Death.	Males.	Females.
ALL CAUSES (Civilians only)	114	104
Measles	1	3
Whooping Cough... ..	4	1
Influenza	20	21
Pulmonary Tuberculosis...	5	6
Tuberculous Meningitis ...	0	3
Other Tuberculous Dis. ...	2	1
Cancer, Malignant Dis. ...	5	8
Meningitis	2	0
Organic Heart Disease ...	4	8
Bronchitis	3	5
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	17	10
Other Respiratory Dis. ...	2	1
Apendicitis & Typhlitis ...	1	0
Cirrhosis of Liver... ..	0	1
Nephritis & Bright's Dis....	5	5
Puerperal Fever	0	1
Parturition apart from Puerperal Fever	0	1
Congenital Debility &c....	9	5
Violence, apart from suicide	3	3
Suicide	1	0
Other Defined Diseases ...	30	21
Deaths of infants under 1 year	14	11

(Provisional figures. Populations estimated to the middle of 1917 have been used for the purposes of this Table.)

* Non-civilians are included in these figures for England and Wales but not for other areas.

Summarising my report I regret that we have had epidemics of Influenza, Measles and Whooping Cough, which have adversely affected our general, epidemic and infantile death rates. One pleasing feature has been the complete absence of deaths from epidemic diarrhoea.

In regard to the needs of the district I would urge forward the necessity of proceeding as rapidly as possible with the proposed housing schemes and the paving of the bed of Purl Brook."

Your obedient servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. S. Sewell". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered below the text "Your obedient servant,".

M.D., Medical Officer of Health.